

money we use to help poor families access basic resources like food, housing, transportation—to jobs, I might add—and medical care, are not “discretionary moneys.” Two hundred thousand annual dollars in White House floral spending is discretionary money. Billions of dollars in corporate subsidies which don't seem to result in jobs as much as they result in inflated executive salaries is discretionary spending. Overly generous Federal pension plans and expensive military programs—those are discretionary funds. Give me a line item breakdown of the Federal budget and I can probably point out where some more of the leaks area.

We are not a stupid populace, but we are easily swayed into believing in fiscal half-truths and dramatic anti-welfare gestures because we are desperate for solutions to social and economic ills. There is no such thing as a “self made man.” Every family, every individual, who is surviving economically is doing so within a system and has an obligation to that system which supports them. The intentional misinforming of the American public concerning fiscal management is the most shameful and cowardly thing I've ever seen. I mentioned early in this letter that the perspective of welfare recipients is sorely needed in leadership roles in this country. There is probably no one more qualified by experience to streamline the Federal budget than the welfare mothers who are managing to raise children on poverty level incomes—or less.

Most of us welfare moms are adept at the basics—first we buy bread and clothe our children, second we pay our bills, and then we try to budget for health, education and “entertainment.” If there is anything left at this point—usually there isn't—we sometimes help others or try to build a small savings. Way, way, way down on our shopping list are rainy day luxuries like bombers, cow fart studies, luxurious travel accommodations, fancy luncheons, financial contributions to successful mega-corps, vacations and wars. I'd like to clarify for the record that neither myself nor any other welfare recipient I know has ever spent tax payer money on that last list of items. I don't have quite enough education to understand all the macro-economic smoke and mirrors that politicians are so fond of dazzling the public with and while I do understand our interdependent relationship with foreign markets and our desire for a healthy corporate world, I understand something even more important and basic. We're pouring our tax dollars into the top of our economic system when it's the bottom that's depleted. We need to try a “trickle up” theory.

My 11-year-old son is very bright and handsome with brown eyes and dark curly hair that he painstakingly combs straight every morning. He's a natural athlete, a straight-A student often described by his teachers as a leader, and he was recently chosen by his fellow classmates to represent them at a regional Science Olympiad. Even so, he is still a young man at risk—the son of an alcoholic and a low income mother, a child of divorce and a member of a new stepfamily. But in this world, you never know, someday one of your daughters or your granddaughters may meet and fall in love with my son.

My 10-year-old is blond, blue eyed, playful and precocious. In first grade, his language skills tested out at high school levels and fortunately, he had a teacher who gave him the opportunity to pursue independent and challenging work. Currently, he and a friend are working with the friend's father to build a robot and learn computer programming. Fortunately, his friend comes from a family with greater resources than ours, and he gets

to share experiences with this friend that I can't provide. He's a very compassionate young man, which is lucky because in this world you never know, someday your own health and well-being may depend on scientific discoveries my son and his friends are able to make.

I'd wager that our core values are pretty similar, although the way we are managing to uphold them is quite different. Please keep in mind that my children and I have been luckier than most. We have a network of friends who support us socially even though they are unable to do so financially. I brought a middle class background and a few life skills with me onto the welfare roles. Other recipients are not this fortunate. The current welfare system, despite its shortcomings, is what was allowed my children and I to thrive, and I am extremely grateful.

I don't know exactly how such an important word as ‘welfare’ took on such negative connotations. I don't know how we lost sight of the fact that parenting is a high status job at all economic levels and a primary responsibility of any society. But we're reaping the impacts of those oversights right now and we can no longer afford to pretend that private, political, and economic spheres are separable or that any of us survive independent of one another. Enclosed with this letter is a summation of ideas concerning welfare and economic reform, distilled from conversations with friends, from my own thoughts, my education and the thoughts and research of others. I challenge you to have the courage and integrity to consider some of these ideas seriously.

I have no doubt that somewhere down the road we'll recognize the need to make radical economic and social adjustments, but probably not until we've caused a lot of trauma to the individual families of this nation. Today's so called leaders who refuse to talk about the reality on which our well-being teeters and who pretend that the only thing wrong with our economy is that poor people have too much money, will eventually be exposed as greedy fools. And people like myself who look on from the fringes of society into the decaying core of its leadership will see that our concerns were right on the money—even though we didn't have much of it.

SINCERELY,

#### LEGISLATION PROVIDING FOR LAND CONVEYANCE TO VIL- LAGES WITHIN THE COOK INLET REGION

#### HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 28, 1995*

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today, at the request of six villages of the Cook Inlet region, a bill to address a long standing unfulfilled obligation of the Federal Government under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to six Alaska Native villages within Cook Inlet region.

Nowhere in Alaska were the competing interests for land so fierce as in southcentral Alaska. Nearly 20 years ago, Cook Inlet region and its six villages entered into a series of agreements with the Department of the Interior that were intended to address the competing land interests in southcentral Alaska and, at the same time, provide for the fulfillment of the

Federal Government's obligation to them under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

This bill that I introduce is intended to fulfill the ANCSA entitlement to the Cook Inlet villages.

The villages within Cook Inlet region have worked diligently to secure from the Bureau of Land Management 29,900 acres of high priority lands selected over 20 years ago. Starting in 1979, BLM had issued a number of decisions and had taken a number of administrative steps towards conveyance of these lands. In spite of this long track record of moving toward conveyance, the Department has now indicated to the villages that it lacks authority to make the conveyances.

I am convinced that the villages of Cook Inlet have an equitable argument that the conveyances are proper, and that further delay in conveyance will cause them unnecessary economic hardship.

My legislation provides the additional authority to the Department and directs that these conveyances be made with no further delays.

REV. J. ALFRED SMITH—A VERY  
SPECIAL PERSON

#### HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 28, 1995*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Sr., pastor of the 4,000 member Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland, California. Dr. Smith will be honored this week by the Baptist Ministers Union of Oakland and Vicinity for being a good neighbor to the citizens of Oakland.

Dr. Smith is Professor of Preaching and Christian Ministry at the American Baptist Seminary of the West and has been Pastor at Allen Temple for over 25 years. Dr. Smith holds the Th.M. degree and was granted a Doctor of Humane Letters (Honoris Causa) in 1990 from the American Baptist Seminary of the West. He also holds the D. Min. degree from the Golden Gate Theological Seminary. He is currently president of the Baptist Ministers Union.

Dr. Smith has been the recipient of many awards and commendations. He has served as President of the Progressive National Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches of the West. He has lectured at most of the major universities in America, including Yale, Harvard, Duke, and Stanford. He was recently listed by Ebony magazine as one of the greatest African American preachers in the United States. He was also recently named by the Oakland Tribune as “Outstanding Citizen of the Year”.

Dr. Smith has long been a leader in our community. As the Baptist Ministers Union has stated, he has moved beyond his pulpit into our communities to respond with love to the needs of all persons, irrespective of color, class, creed, gender, or sexual orientation. That is why I am proud to recognize him today. He is more than a “good neighbor”—he is the best neighbor!